

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7338
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLO, MOPS, LE
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON ARAFAT'S MEETING
WITH ERSKINE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CONFLICTING PUBLIC STATEMENTS LEAVE
THE PLO POSITION ON A CEASE-FIRE IN DOUBT. ARAFAT
TOLD ERSKINE THAT THE PLO WOULD ACCEPT A CEASE-FIRE IN
SOUTH LEBANON, ACCORDING TO A U.N. STATEMENT. BUT
SALAH KHALAF SAID THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD FIGHT ON.
WAFAS ACCOUNT OF ARAFAT'S MEETING WITH ERSKINE SAID THE
PLO WOULD HELP UNIFIL, BUT MADE NO REFERENCE TO A CEASE-
FIRE. END SUMMARY.

2. CONFLICTING PUBLIC STATEMENTS SHOW THAT THE PLO HAS
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NOT YET CLEARLY ENDORSED A CEASE-FIRE FOR SOUTH LEBANON.

3. ACCORDING TO A U.N. STATEMENT, YASIR ARAFAT ACCEPTED
SECRETARYGENERAL KURT WALDHEIM'S MARCH 27 CALL FOR
A CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON DURING A MEETING WITH
UNIFIL COMMANDER ERSKINE IN BEIRUT ON MARCH 28
(SEPTEL). ARAFAT TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING

WITH ERSKINE: "I SAY ON BEHALF OF THE PLO AND THE JOINT FORCES THAT WE WILL PROVIDE ALL THE FACILITIES WITHIN OUR CAPACITY TO HELP THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FORCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR MISSION. WE DO THIS TO FACILITATE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE ISRAELI FORCES FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY."

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, FATAH OFFICIAL SALAH KHALAF (ABU-IYAD) WAS QUOTED IN LEFTIST AL-LIWA AS SAYING: "WE ARE NOT ISSUING ORDERS TO CEASE FIRE. WE HAVE NOT ACHIEVED ANYTHING IN OUR HISTORY WITHOUT FIGHTING. MILITARY OPERATIONS WILL CONTINUE AS LONG AS THE ISRAELIS REMAIN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON." THE PLO'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE U.N. ZAHDI TARZI, WAS QUOTED BY AP AS SAYING THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD CONTINUE TO "RESPOND TO ISRAELI PROVOCATIONS" AND THAT THE ISRAELI ARMED PRESENCE IN THE AREA WAS A MAJOR PROVOCATION."

5. WAFAS ACCOUNT WAS EQUIVOCAL. ALTHOUGH WAFAS SAID THE PLO WOULD FACILITATE THE MISSION OF UNIFIL TO HELP GUARANTEE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, IT MADE NO REFERENCE TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE CEASE-FIRE. FULL TEXT OF WAFAS ACCOUNT IN MARCH 28 ENGLISH LANGUAGE BULLETIN FOLLOWS:

A. BEGIN TEXT. "AT THE REQUEST OF U.N. SECRETARY-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GENERAL DR. KURT WALDHEIM, YASIR ARAFAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GENERAL COMMANDER OF THE FORCES OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION, MET A UNITED NATIONS DELEGATION IN HIS OFFICE THIS MORNING. ON THE PALESTINIAN SIDE, THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY ABU LUFT, HEAD OF THE PLO POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, BRIG. SAAD SAYEL, LT. COL. ABU HAMID AND BASEL AQL. ON THE UN SIDE, THE COMMANDER OF THE UN INTERIM FORCES IN LEBANON (UNIFIL), GENERAL ERSKINE; THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF DR. WALDHEIM, JAMES JONAHAN (JONAH); AND THE LIAISON OFFICER OF THE UN TROOPS IN LEBANON, COLONEL LAJEUNESSE, WERE PRESENT.

B. "DURING THE MEETING, ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO FACILITATE THE UN TROOPS' MISSION IN THE OCCUPIED REGIONS OF SOUTH LEBANON. WAFAS LEARNED THAT ARAFAT AFFIRMED THAT THE PLO IS READY TO EXTEND ALL REQUIRED FACILITIES TO MAKE THE UN FORCES' MISSION SUCCESSFUL AND TO GUARANTEE THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. ARRANGEMENTS WERE ALSO MADE TO APPOINT LIAISON OFFICERS FROM BOTH THE JOINT FORCES AND THE UN TROOPS." END TEXT.

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